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THE NATIONAL BEREAVEMENT.

A

SERMON

ON THE DEATH OF

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

DELIVERED APRIL 23, 1865.

IN THE

SECOND REF'D PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEWBURGH,

BY ITS PASTOR,

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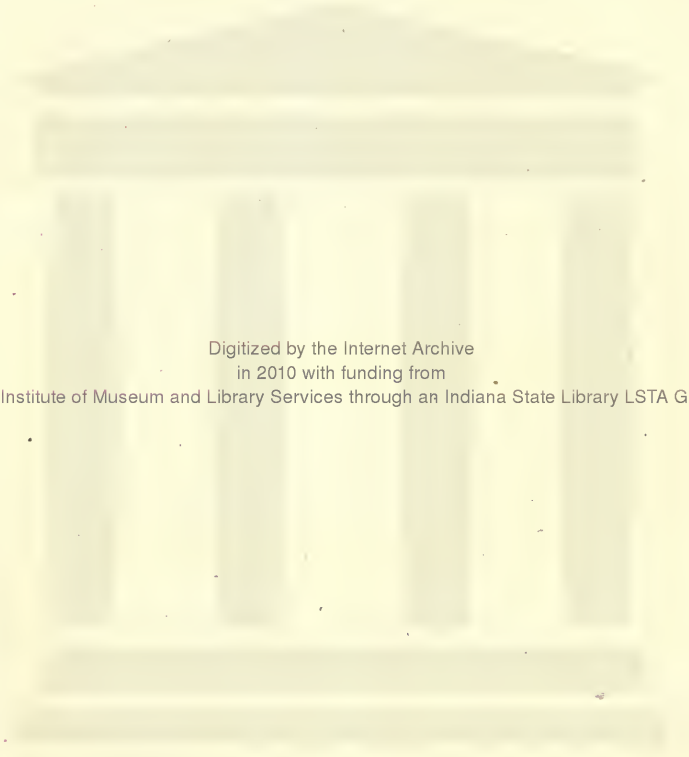

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SERMON.

And all Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah.—2d Chronicles 35 : 24.

There are certain hours in the life of man when the heart is crushed with sorrow, when nature seeming to weep in sympathy with him draws its sombre curtains around his dwelling, and when hope that has lighted and cheered his soul takes wings and flies away. Such an hour, no doubt, most of you before me have seen, when cruel death entered your dwelling and rudely snatched away a cherished idol and left you sad, desolate, and alone under the shadow of the grave; when the soul stood with mute astonishment before a world moving on as usual, and felt as if all business should cease, the sun should stand still in his course and the wheels of nature cease their revolutions. Not unlike this sad state is the condition of millions in this land at the present time. The darkness of the tomb fills almost every household, the cry of lamentation goes up from millions of hearts and they mourn as one mourns for an only son and are in bitterness as for a first born. THE NATION MOURNS. It is an hour of mourning in its history, in the cause of civil liberty and wherever the telegraphic wires, trembling with the sad news, tells the mournful tale; truly it is a night of Egyptian darkness. The first-born in the land has been slain. The President of the United States has been assassinated—a martyr to civil liberty.

While the hearts of men, in consequence of this startling tragedy, are deeply moved and society rudely torn by the ploughshare of divine judgments it is not an unsuitable time to sow the seeds of divine truth, to moderate the wild passions of men, to give shape and direction to public opinion and to kindly soothe the bleeding hearts of christians. Such an occasion should not be passed by unimproved by the minister of the gospel who feels the force of the command "Be instant in season, out of season." Our attention is therefore fitly turned to that darkest spot in the annals of modern crime—a deed that has made the blood of millions to tingle in their veins, and festooned with mournful drapery almost every dwelling, and town, and city throughout the land. No act in the history of any nation has produced such spontaneous, universal, and overwhelming grief. The lamentation is equal to, nay, it exceeds the lamentation made for king Josiah: "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah."

This good king, whose death was the occasion of the mourning that is the plaintive key-note of our text, reigned thirty-one years over Judah and died about six hundred years before the Christian Era. He was one of the few kings of Judah that did right in the sight of the Lord, who zealously destroyed the monuments of idolatry, repaired and beautified the temple, and honored God during his whole administration. According to an explicit prediction he was gathered into his grave in peace and his eyes saw not the judgments that were poured out on Judah. He fell in battle while contending with the Egyptians at Hadadrimmon in the Valley of Megiddo; and his death was deeply lamented by the people and his praise was celebrated by the singing men and singing women: "All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah."

In the present discourse I do not intend to draw a parallel between this king and the lamented President—two great rulers who were cut down in the mid-day of their glory—for in the one case we have only the judgement of men, but in the other the unerring decision of God in his revealed word. In the death of both, however, and the deep sensation produced thereby, there is something in common, and much for instruction and warning.

But as the late Providence, which has astounded the hearts of millions, is so fresh in our minds we almost involuntarily turn to it—indeed with a heart filled with sad and strange feelings, we cannot refrain from speaking on such a solemn and admonitory subject. There are two points to which we would solicit attention—THE PRESENT NATIONAL BEREAVEMENT AND THE LESSONS OF THE HOUR.

I.—The Present National Bereavement.

This claims our most serious attention. Nay, it presses itself irresistibly upon our attention, and

1. IT IS A MYSTERIOUS BEREAVEMENT. All Divine Providences are mysterious: "Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters and thy footsteps are not known."

> "God moves in a mysterious way,
> His wonders to perform."

The wheels of Providence are so high, awful, and intricate that we cannot measure or comprehend them. They are wheels within wheels and so high that they are dreadful. "How unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past finding out." No man can satisfactorily explain how sin originated and for one moment found a lodging place among the heavenly hosts; or why a God of love and power permitted Adam to eat of the fruit of the tree in the garden and thus turn the fair plains of this world into a great battle field where the wild passions of men rage in unlicensed fury and the slaughtered heaps of the dying and dead lie commingled together: or why He allows gigantic nations to rise up as great monsters of iniquity and for ages spread their withering curse over intelligent and peaceful citizens: or why this most fiendish and colossal rebellion has been permitted to rise and continue with unabated fury for four long years. These are some of the mysterious things within the vail in the inner temple before which we must stand in awe, but unto which we cannot approach, and on which gaze with our weak and short-sighted vision.

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In this same mysterious class we find that dark tragedy by which a nation was bereaved and its ruler removed from time to eternity. An intelligent and christian world stands astounded in its presence. They ask why did God permit such a fiendish deed? Why did he not give warning by a voice from heaven? Why did not lightning come down from above and smite the assassin to the dust? Why was there not a Joab to avenge immediately the death of an Asahel? These and a thousand other questions might be asked, and yet the tragedy stands out in all its attending circumstances as a great mystery. Mysterious in itself, in its relation to the nation, and in its effects upon the great questions now at issue in the land. Taking place on the very day when the once dishonored, but now triumphant banner is reinstated in the citidal from which it was removed four years ago by traitorous hands—at a time too when the star of peace was gleaming on the dark margin of night, and when the traitorous beasts of prey were fleeing to their hiding places for safety—that the nation should be bereaved at such a crisis is one of those inscrutible mysteries that characterize the administration of Him who does all things according to his good pleasure. Before this Providence we bow, leaving the issue with God.

2. It is a sad and painful bereavement. Death in the ordinary course of nature is attended with sadness and many painful circumstances; hence it is appropriately termed "The King of terrors." As it comes marching on in the slow tread of disease and cuts down youth in its tenderness and manhood in its strength every heart feels crushed and the soul bleeds at every pore; sadness draws its sombre mantle over every brow and the song of mirth is turned into the plaintive funeral dirge. But when death comes in an unexpected moment, in an hour when we look not for it; when it comes too not in the natural course of disease but by the hand of a stealthy assassin and strikes down its victim in cold blood it assumes a character so appalling that the strongest heart quails before it, and commingled feelings of grief, terror, and holy indignation fill every breast.

Characterized by circumstances like these is the late national bereavement. In health, with the bright prospect of a long and

useful life before him, the ruler of this land was unconciously smitten down by the hand of a fiendish assassin, and that too in the very presence of the companion of his bosom and a host of admiring friends. History scarcely furnishes a parallel of such daring and attrocious wickedness. Nor on the other hand does it afford an example of such deepseated and universal sorrow as that event produced in the heart of the nation. Strong and iron-hearted men weep: old and young weep: tears flow down like rivers. Oh! it is like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo. Multitudes of deaths occur around us each day but none are accompanied with such sad and painful effects as this one. And the reason is that he was truly the nation's idol—beloved and admired by the millions. The kindness of his heart, his humility, prudence, transparent honesty of purpose, unswerving firmness of character, and zeal for liberty to all men, enshrined him in the hearts of christians, of loyal men, and of a down-trodden race that has, by his instrumentality, been brought out of the Egyptian house of bondage. His death, occurring too at a time when the heart of the nation was tender and aching by reason of former bereavements, when almost every household mourns the loss of one or more that have been swept away by this cruel scourge of war, sends anew the arrows of affliction to wrangle in the soul and adds gall to the worm-wood. To lose the head of the nation at such a time is sorrow indescribable. I envy not the heart of him who did not shed tears for this bereavement, who did not feel that he had lost a friend, a benefactor to the human race.

Another circumstance casts an additional gloom over this painful bereavement. All felt a satisfaction in seeing the lamented President spared to be rewarded with the success of his policy and to witness the day of victory and peace. They felt that after four years of struggling amid anxiety, disappointment, pain and treason he should enjoy a period when he could reign in peace and reap the full reward of his labor. But this hope has been blasted, and Moses-like he only gets a Pisgah's view of the goodly land, and dies, giving place to another to conduct farther the triumphant hosts and gather the harvest of national

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peace and glory. These and other circumstances make this bereavement sad and painful.

3. It is a great bereavement—a bereavement that is a great national loss, the consequences of which no one can fully estimate. I am aware that God who removes one can raise up another to accomplish his work, and that his eternal plans will certainly be executed irrespective of the will or power of man; but yet humanly speaking the late national bereavement is truly a great calamity. To lose a great man in the world of letters, of science, or in the church is admitted by all to be a great loss; and equally so is the removal of a great man from the administration of government. That the lamented President was a great man must be admitted. He was not a genius whose intellectual greatness shone bright in any one department of literature, science or statesmanship; but looking at his attributes in the aggregate, the entire harmony of his mental endowments, the clear and comprehensive perception of the great social problems of the age, and the iron will with which he pursued his noble purpose we are forced to the conclusion that he was a great man—one peculiarly fitted to occupy the high position entrusted to him; and we feel assured that few could have more successfully guided the vessel of state through the storms of civil revolution than he has done. To lose such a pilot as the storm-beaten vessel comes in sight of land and is about to enter the tortuous channel which leads to the haven of peace is a great calamity. At this particular juncture when the smoke of battle is passing away, and victory comes rushing in from every field of conflict, a leader is needed to adjust the difficult problems of reconstruction who is thoroughly acquainted with the disturbed and disturbing elements, and who by a long experience knows the internal movements of the machinery of government, as well as its delicate relations to the zealous and crafty governments of other nations. A new hand at the helm may give a jar to the national interests and retard the progress of those great principles that the present revolution is evolving. But to the witnesses of Christ, as well as to the nation itself, this bereavement is a great loss. The late President exemplified more fully the spirit of christianity and more frequently directed the heart of the nation

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to God than any other President of the United States. His Proclamations were imbued with a spirit of confidence in God and his last inaugural was the most religious document that ever came from a ruler of this land. The British STANDARD speaking of it says "it is the most remarkable thing of the sort ever pronounced by any President of the United States from the first day until now. Its Alpha and Omega is ALMIGHTY GOD, the God of Justice and the Father of mercies, who is working out the purposes of his love. It is invested with a dignity and pathos which lift it high above anything of the kind, whether in the old or the new world. The whole thing puts us in mind of the best men of the English Commonwealth; there is, in fact, much of the old prophet about it." While he was not a member of the visible church yet he has confessed that he did love Jesus, and I feel confident that if his life had been spared we would have seen the sublime spectacle of the President of this nation joining the sacramental hosts and sitting down at the table of the Lord. He, too, was ever accessible to commissions from the various churches, soliciting their counsel and prayers, kindly encouraging them, and manifesting a willingness to bring the nation up to the standard of christianity. We could approach him with entire confidence, and hence in his death we feel that our cause has lost a friend at court. But there is still another class that will feel this sore bereavement—that sable race from whose manacled limbs he has broken the fetters and who look up to him with tearful eyes as their liberator, their father and almost their God. The loudest cries will be heard from them, and the bitterest tears will flow from their eyes. So attached to him are they, that some of them held up their little children to look upon the dead face of their emancipator that these may tell it to future generations; and eagerly they pressed to see but the car in which his remains were carried to their final resting place. To all and in every aspect this bereavement will be a great loss. Humanity has lost a benefactor, the cause of civil liberty an able advocate and the nation a wise, honest, and experienced ruler. A great man has fallen.

4. IT IS A BEREAVEMENT, HOWEVER, THAT HAS MERCY MINGLED WITH IT. Mercy sits enthroned amid the divine graces. The wheels of Providence are held in the hand of mercy, and at eve-

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ry revolution the blessings of mercy fall like gentle showers upon the mown grass. Dark as is the cloud yet the rainbow of mercy wreathes its brow with gorgeous colors. However sad and painful the Providence may be yet mercy is mingled with it. Many look at the national bereavement and see nothing but gloom in it; but I firmly believe that it is a blessing in disguise, that God has meant it for good and the issue will declare it.—When Patrick Hamilton, the first martyr in Scotland, baptised the Reformation with his blood, hope almost fled from many hearts. When James Renwick, Scotland's last martyr extinguished by his blood the flames of persecution, despair settled down in hearts where the fire of a pure faith and holy patriotism had burned most vehemently. And yet the blood of these martyrs was the seed of the church and the seal of mercy to a world lying in wickedness. The defeat in the first battle of the present war chilled the hearts of thousands, and the cry of despair went forth from many lips, and yet that defeat was a real blessing. It and subsequent defeats were necessary to prepare a reluctant nation to do justice to man, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land to all the inhabitants thereof. In the same light I look at the present sad event—the blackest spot in the history of this blackest rebellion in christendom. It will issue for good. It has already done good by sealing the poisoned lips of traitors, by stamping the seal of condemnation upon this nefarious rebellion, as well as by firing the hearts and nerving the arms of the loyal for fresh efforts in the cause of liberty. Throughout the whole land shall rise up through this gloom monuments of mercy on which in golden letters shall be engraved the inscription, "Thy mercy, O Lord, is in the heavens." Painful and great as is this bereavement yet it is not as severe as the nation deserves. God's mercy appears in it, in arresting the hands of those conspiritors and preventing them from accomplishing their diabolical purpose of murdering all the heads of the various departments of government. It is no less conspicuous in delaying the terrible tragedy until after the head of the rebellion was crushed by the iron heel of the nation: for had it taken place when the armies of the south were in their strength most fatal consequences might have been the results. Equally manifest is the mercy

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of God in not only preventing an internal revolution, which would have taken place in Europe under similar circumstances, but in uniting as one man the hearts of men of all political parties. "Thy mercy O God is above all thy other works. The earth O Lord is full of thy mercy."

II.—The Lessons of the Hour.

Providence in its mysterious dispensations is a great teacher, from whose lips we receive a new revelation of God's purposes and man's duty. Prominent among these instructive Providences are the events of the last four years and their culmination in the crime of assassination which speak to us louder than the thunders of Mount Sinai. But what is the lesson taught?

1. This National Bereavement gives us an insight into the Spirit and Character of this Rebellion. John in vision saw three unclean spirits like frogs that came out of the mouth of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. These are Infidelity, Despotism, and Popery—the three great elements of the anti-christian system, and that co-operate in the present Rebellion. The second of these—despotism—is more prominent in this conflict, and is truly the animating and sustaining spirit of the Rebellion. It is a relentless, cruel and tyranical spirit. The Rebellion began with a deliberate determination to rob a helpless race of its social rights and to erect a colossal empire upon slavery as its corner stone. This was openly and proudly proclaimed to the world by its leaders; and is the spirit that has fired and controlled the rebellion during the four years of bloody conflict. It turned the soldiers of the South into those fiends that made trinkets out of the bones and drinking cups out of the skulls of freemen—that butchered in cold blood the soldiers of Fort Pillow and elsewhere—that drove our soldiers into the open stockades where for months they were exposed to the burning sun, the drenching rains and chilling blasts, until starvation and death relieved them of untold sufferings. It was this spirit that set cities on fire, that burned orphan asylums, that hounded the poor Africans through our streets and hunted them down like beasts of prey;—that to a great extent silenced the pulpit and the press and caused an intelligent nation to bow before the

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Moloch of Slavery; and as if this was not enough it has plotted a conspiracy, unparalleled in atrocity, which has risen up like a giant in his dying agony and struck the head and the heart of the nation, sending a chill of horror throughout the whole civilized world. Such is this Rebellion. And though it has been guilded over in this country and Europe by fair professions, and like Satan appearing as an angel of light, has deceived many.—But this last act of desperation has stripped it of its garb and causes it to stand out naked, and in its hideous proportions, before the gaze of an indignant world. Men now see it as a huge, eyeless, soulless monster that has thrust its poisoned fangs into the heart of the nation, and is drinking up the very life blood of liberty. Those who have sympathized with this rebellion, who have either given it aid directly, or urged that it should be let alone, and that the war on the part of the nation was unjust—a mere conflict for empire—now see their sinful folly and unite with the friends of liberty in a desire to plant the heel of condemnation upon this cruel monster. Wondrously has God, by this mysterious bereavement taught us a lesson in regard to the character of the present rebellion.

2. Another Lesson we learn from this Bereavement is that the Master Spirits of this Rebellion should be punished. Treason is considered in all civilized nations as a crime of the greatest enormity and is punished by the severest penalties. Absalom was guilty of treason against the throne of his father David and in the Providence of God was punished by being caught by the hair of his head in the boughs of an oak, and pierced through by darts from the hand of a Joab. Judas was guilty of treason against his Lord and Master and for it was made the instrument of his own punishment—he went out and hanged himself and all his bowels gushed out. Now if treason be a crime punishable with death, the leaders of this rebellion are guilty of it and certainly deserve to die. They not only waged a war against a government that has fostered them but have been the means of butchering hundreds of thousands of innocent men, sending sorrow into countless homes, squandering untold treasures, and nourishing that spirit of revenge which goaded the assassin to his terrible crime. To punish

such characters is not vengeance, but JUSTICE, demanded alike by the claims of right government and the spirit of christianity. If such crimes are not punished, then law is a mockery and government a farce. David in the leniency of his paternal heart allowed Absalom, who had been guilty of murder, to return to Jerusalem and into his very presence, and for this was rewarded by an insurrection led on by that ungrateful son. God commanded Soul to slay Agag, and for sparing him he was removed from his kingdom. With these examples before us it would seem that God in his mysterious Providence has permitted that man who, in the kindness of his heart, had not the courage to inflict full punishment on treason, to be removed that the sword of state might be wielded by one who would exercise stern and inflexible justice. Mercy characterized the reign of the late President and if we are not greatly mistaken justice will assert its right in the person of the present one. The little finger of the latter will be larger than the loins of the former. To the nation God is now calling, "Though the heavens should fall let justice be done." "Bear not the sword in vain. Be a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."

3. ANOTHER LESSON OF THE HOUR IS THAT NO COMPROMISE SHOULD BE MADE WITH REBELLION. One egregious blunder, that the framers of the Constitution made, was a compromise with slavery. By that act they entailed upon posterity a curse that has drenched our land with blood. The descendants of those great men now confess the error that was then made, and are reaping the bitter fruits thereof. While one of the leaders of liberty was advocating his cause in Parliament during the time of the plague in London he received a letter by the hand of the messenger and on opening it found a foul rag taken from one affected with this terrible malady, accompanied with a brief note that if this rag did not do the work—meaning, communicate the disease and take his life—THEN THE DAGGER. So the rag of slavery was tacked on the Constitution, its friends expecting that it would forever disease and control the whole nation, and when their expectations were being disappointed, then they drew the dagger and plunged it into the heart of the nation. There is danger now of Compromise being made with rebellion, of some

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foul rag being tacked on the reconstructed Union, and thus the seeds sown for a future insurrection. The cry of peace is beginning to overshadow the claims of justice and truth, and some would purchase it at the expense of both of these. To arouse justice, apparently slumbering in the heart of the nation, this fearful tragedy has been permitted, and calls loudly for no compromise with sin, injustice, and wrong. This is the cry that comes from sixty thousand green graves where sleep the skeletons of those that were starved in rebel prisons. It comes from the countless number whose bones lie buried on the gory battle field. It comes from the great army of the maimed and diseased that extends its wings throughout the length and breadth of the land. It is heard in the sound of that bullet that sent death to the throne of the nation. These and a thousand other voices of woe cry out against compromise with rebellion. If that spirit of compromise would rise up again the very "stones would cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber." "What communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial." The national bereavement has buried compromise, rolled a great stone upon the grave's mouth and sealed it with the blood of the nation.

4. The Lesson of the Hour is that the present bereavement is a punishment upon the Nation for its Sins. Civil government is a divine ordinance: "The powers that be are ordained of God." From God it receives its existence, the authority to administer justice, and the laws by which it is governed, and is therefore not an organization of mans creation, though man has the right of determining the particular form of government. It is as much a divine institution as the church. The doctrine, therefore, that the people are the source of authority to the exclusion of God is an infidel, unscriptural, and dangerous assumption: "There is no power but of God." Not only is civil government ordained of God, but it has an organic personality, a oneness of national existence, and is a moral person in the sight of God; and is therefore in its national individuality as directly responsible to God, and under as solemn obligation to recognize God as any one of its subjects over which it wields its sceptre. Any other idea of civil government makes it a mere

partnership concern, like a banking or business association. If this national moral person, then, refuses to acknowledge God and his law it will be punished as certainly as the individual that is guilty of the same sin. "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God."—Ps. 9:17. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve Thee shall perish; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted."—Is. 60:12. The wrecks of nations that lie along the stream of time bear testimony to the same great truth. Assyria, Egypt, Greece, and Rome loudly proclaim from their buried ruins that the nations that will not honor God shall certainly perish. With these truths and stubborn facts before us we cannot evade the conclusion that the judgments of the past four years, but especially their culmination in the assassination of the chief magistrate are punishments for national sins. Prominent among these sins is a refusal to give a definite recognition of God in the national charter. The atheist can, and does, plead that it is a nation without a God, that it receives not its authority from a Supreme Being, and the Constitution will sustain him in that position. No later ago than this spring the New York TRIBUNE, the leading paper of the country, proudly boasted that God was not the source of authority in this government, that it was not a christian nation, and then instituted an argument to prove this atheistical principle: and I have not yet seen the secular or religious newspapers that have rebuked such bold infidelity. This position of the TRIBUNE is entirely consonant with the theory on which this government is based, that God is not the source of civil authority and therefore should not be recognized, but that "we the people" are the source. It exposes the nation to the just charge; "Ye have set up kings but not by me, princes and I knew it not." The oath in the Constitution—the only expression that can be construed as a recognition of God—does not pre-suppose the existence of a Divine Being much less as the source of civil authority, for he that takes the oath is not called to swear by THE NAME of God; he may just as well swear by heaven, by earth or by Jerusalem; and then to escape even the form of an oath, the atheist, infidel or heathen may "affirm," which does not imply the existance of God. Thus the Constitution does not recognize God

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but is the symbolical expression of infidelity if not direct atheism.

But another prominent objection to the constitution of this government is an omission, if not a direct refusal to recognize the authority of Messiah, the Prince of the Kings of the earth.—This springs a question which meets more earnest opposition than any other advocated by the friends of a christianly constituted civil government. Few object to a recognition of God, but multitudes persistently assail the recognition of Christ. And yet the claims of Messiah to civil recognition must be manifest to every Bible reader. God rules the worlds by Christ as his delegate or vicegerent: "All power is given to me in heaven and on earth" says Christ. "The Father judgeth no man but has committed all judgment to the Son." "He is head over all to his body the Church." As he then has "all power," "all judgment," and is "head over all," so he is the delegated agent that administers and exercises government over all the affairs of God's universal empire. God then, under this gracious administration, rules the nations only THROUGH Christ and BY Christ; and if the nations should recognize God, as nearly all christians admit, they MUST to be consistent recognize Christ, the Father's servant and agent. If we recognize a government we must recognize him who administers that government. Indeed, unless nations do recognize Christ they cannot recognize the true God, for "he that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father."—Moreover if this doctrine, we advocate, be not true then in what sense can we understand the terms applied to Christ, "He is the Governor among the nations," "the Prince of the kings of the earth," "King of kings and Lord of lords?" These, then, must have no meaning or else were intended by the Spirit of God to deceive man! The predictions made in regard to the nations acknowledging Christ confirm this same position: "He shall subdue the people under us and the NATIONS under our feet."—Ps. 47:3. "All kings shall fall down before Him and all NATIONS shall serve him."—Ps. 72:11. "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."—Rev. 11:15. Now if nations at some FUTURE day will recognize Christ, then certainly it must be their duty to do so at the PRESENT time. Subjects have no right to cast off the authority of

their ruler and promise that they will obey him at some future time. No: God calls upon them now to "kiss the Son;" and this command is not given to kings and judges merely in their individual but also in their official character. It was in their official character that "the kings of the earth set themselves against the Lord," that Herod and Pontius Pilate conspired against king Jesus, and it is in the same capacity that they are commanded to "kiss the Son," to render loyal subjection to Messiah. Strange doctrine that rulers should serve Christ as individuals, and serve Satan and the world in their official capacity—that men as individuals should recognize the Messiah, and the same persons when organized into a nation—a moral person—should cast off his authority! Such a doctrine is alike repugnant to Scripture and reason. The state should not only be largely imbued with a christian spirit, but manifest a distinctively christian character, give an encouragement to christianity over Paganism and infidelity, and openly acknowledge the christian's Messiah.

Besides a refusal to recognize Christ, the rejection of God's law as "the higher law" is a sin which has brought down national judgments upon the land. The moral precepts of the Bible are as binding upon nations as upon churches and individuals. When God first laid the principles of civil government deep in human nature he stamped upon man's heart his law,—termed the law of nature, which is substantially the written will of God. The apostacy of man did not exempt him in his civil capacity from that original law; and when God on Mount Sinai re-wrote that law—not on man's heart—but on the two tables of stone, man was brought under an additional obligation to make it the law of his social and civil conduct. And at this late date in the world's history magistracy is as much under the control of that law as it was in the garden of Eden, at Mount Sinai, or during the whole Old Testament dispensation. Christ did not come to destroy the law—to exempt nations from that law by which they were formerly bound—but to fulfil the law, and if it were possible to give it new force. The law of nature, then, and the moral law of the Bible, being the same, the latter should be recognized as the Supreme law of nations in their judicial, legislative and executive administration. Indeed, there are certain laws in the Bible which

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if not executed by the civil magistrate must remain a dead letter, and therefore should be expunged—their very presence in that book being an impeachment of the wisdom of God. I refer to those laws that have civil penalties attached to them. The church administers censure, but the state inflicts penalties. It is the civil magistrate that punishes theft, murder, and other crimes; and if he does not execute the law against these then the law remains a nullity. This fact shows clearly that civil governments are bound by the written law of God—the Bible. The leading divines of every age, christian statesmen and the best writers on jurisprudence acknowledge the principle that the Bible is the source of all law. And yet with an open Bible before it and the judgment of the best men of ancient and modern times, this nation places the Constitution higher than the Bible, and some of its statesmen scorned the very idea of there being any law higher than the Constitution, until the term "Higher Law" was used, even by some professed christians as an approbrious epithet. Is not this nation verily guilty as it stands before the bar of God and is judged by the written law for a rejection of that law.

Closely allied to these sins that are in the organic constitution of the nation there is, as a natural consequence, a prevalent corruption in the various departments of the government. Profanity, intemperance, dishonesty, sabbath-breaking and a thousand other evils that have filled up the cup of the nation's iniquity, that have corrupted the national arteries and that have broken forth in moral diseases that have ripened the nation for the punitive, yet purifying judgments of heaven. And amid all this sin and woe the most discouraging feature is the indifference of statesmen, of christians, and of the ministry to the great question of moral and Constitutional reform. The petitions which christians have sent to Congress asking for a recognition of God, of Christ and his law by the nation, have been passed over with little interest, and that even when God's judgments were thundering at the doors, and the question of national existence trembling in the balance. Many ministers of the gospel, too, daily mourn over the ravages of this terrible war and the sad death of their chief magistrate, and have not the will or the moral courage to come out and acknowledge these defects in the govern-

ment and aid in an effort to bring the Constitution up to the standard of God's word. Admitting that God and his law should be acknowledged, yet they do not lift their little finger to attain such an end. Before the war began they manifested the same spirit in regard to human liberty—blindly supposing that preaching against slavery was preaching politics—until God by his fearful works in righteousness aroused them from their slumbers and called them to proclaim,—to preach—liberty to all men. And it would seem now that some still more terrible calamity must be sent to awaken them to urge upon the nation the duty of making God's law the foundation of all civil enactments. In the sermons delivered in the various pulpits while the lamented President was lying cold in death there was scarcely a hint—at least in those reported in the papers—that there was any sin in the nation to cause God to cover the land with a cloud in his anger. And the same characteristics appeared in the papers and the conversation of men. Well might we say in the words of the Prophet "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel into anger, they are gone away backward." God has a controversy with this nation. He is speaking to it by his judgments as well as by his word and saying, "Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" "If ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword." Blind and infatuated with sin the christian must be who does not see that the present calamities are judgments for national sins.

5. THE PRESENT BEREAVEMENT IS A LESSON CALLING FOR NATIONAL REPENTANCE. If the charge of national sins be true—and who can doubt it—then the call, loud as the judgments that have thundered over the land, comes to the nation to break off its sins by works of righteousness and turn unto the Lord. It is the voice of a Jonah crying to the great city, "repent, for thy wickedness hath come up before the Lord. Similar calls were made during the years of peace, when the blessings of heaven descended upon the whole land and lay about each dwelling like the manna in the wilderness or the dew drops of the morning; and yet the nation hardened its heart—its neck

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becoming as an iron sinew and its brow as brass—and refused to be ashamed. Four years in the fiery furnace of a war unparalleled in magnitude and atrocity, yet Ephraim-like it is joined to its idols. And now as if this was the last—the tenth plague of Egypt—God speaks to the nation from the icy lips of its beloved and chosen chief as he lies in the cold embrace of death and twenty millions of mourners stand silent and weeping around his bier. He calls to the nation through tears that gush from eyes unused to weep; through the sombre drapery that is spread like a pall over almost every dwelling; through thirty thousand pulpits from which prayers ascended to heaven as the solemn cortege began to move in the capitol of the nation. And this week he again calls to the citizens of this place by that train, which four years ago glided along the opposite bank of our noble river bearing in a triumphal car the newly elected ruler, but on Wednesday of this week returns slowly, sorrowfully, draped in mourning and bearing the lifeless body back to his home, to his final resting place over which a weeping nation will drop its tears. Oh! is this not enough, ENOUGH, to call the nation to repentance, and cause it to rise up as one man and in the presence of the angels and the nations of the earth swear allegiance to Him that sitteth upon the throne? Must other and severer afflictions come? Must the first born in every family be given as a sacrifice upon the nation's altar? Oh! must our Jerusalem be burned to ashes and the people of the land carried into captivity and made to mingle their tears with the streams of a strange land ere they will cast away their idols and begin to build anew the house of the Lord? Oh God! spare, spare. May thy hand that is laid heavily upon this nation receive a nation's acknowledgement; may its sins be washed away by those purifying influences that come down from above: may a nation be here born as it were in a day and stand forth in glory among the nations of the earth.

"As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its base the rolling clouds are spread
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

6. THIS SAD CALAMITY IS A LESSON THAT WILL DEEPEN IN THE HEART OF THE NATION THE PRINCIPLE OF CIVIL LIBERTY AND GIVE A NEW IMPULSE TO CIVILIZATION AND CHRISTIANITY. The

terrific storm that sweeps madly across a continent lashing into a furious conflict the elements of nature, and threatening widespread destruction, at the same time purifies the atmosphere and imparts new vitality to the vegetable, animal and rational creation. Dreary and barren is the face of nature when hoary frost spreads its chilling mantle over the earth and yet that season is necessary for the soil to manufacture, by a mysterious chemical process, the nutritive elements that will give a new impulse to vegetation when icy winter throws open its doors and rosy spring comes forth. So in the moral world the storms of revolution and the winters of adversity cause truth and liberty to take a deeper hold on the hearts of men and give a fresh impulse to a christianized civilization. The reformation period in Britain and on the Continent was a stormy day in the world's history, and yet those storms quickened the seeds of liberty and christianity, and caused them to ripen into the fruits we now enjoy. The four years of the present rebellion and the last day of those years, in which the evil spirits leaped forth from the demon of slavery, fastened their fangs in the heart of the great emancipator, and held a wild carnival over his dying body, were dark-painful and sorrowful days: and yet who does not see that the events of these four years and their last day of crowning infamy have given an impulse to liberty, that will sweep away, like an avalanche coming down from the Alps, every vestige of that barbarous institution which has cursed our land? If there were ever any doubts about the Jubilee Proclamation of liberty, it shall now stand; for a seal dipped in the blood of its dying author has been stamped upon it, and no man is able to loose the seal thereof. Liberty again baptized with blood shall go westward and eastward until it encircles the earth with its gorgeous girdle, scattering its blessings in golden showers from pole to pole. Side by side with liberty—nay, in advance of it and leading it—marches Christianity which, by these events, has been enthroned higher in the hearts of men and advances with a more rapid speed toward that bright day when the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun sevenfold. Fearlessly do we assert that this nation has come out of this furnace of war more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of

liberty and Christianity than it ever was before. It has made more progress in the pathway of national security, liberty and glory, during the past four years than it has done since it took a place among the family of nations. The ministers of Christ have now new confidence in the truth, and may be of good cheer for the morning cometh. The storm through which the nation has passed causes the out-lines of the great principles of God's word to appear more distinct, and has given an impulse to the cause which is so dear to every true christian, philanthropist and statesman. To God be the praise for the lessons of the hour, for the progress made in the elements of national greatness, and for the hopes excited for a happier and more glorious day when this and all nations shall become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ; when the Lord shall be thine everlasting light and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

In conclusion we have reason to mourn—even admitting the great progress made—over the low state of morality and christianity in our land. It is a shame, that amid the influences of christianity and the high rank which this nation takes in civilization, it must bear the odium of raising such a wretch as a Booth and those conspiritors that have been engaged in a plot to assassinate the Heads of this government. Equally lamentable is the fact that religion has as little influence on those to whom are intrusted the administration of the government; and that by them incouragement is given to the stage with all its corrupting influences. I would not unjustly draw a shadow over the fair name of the lamented President—I believe that the goodness of his heart would not have inclined him to the theater, it was owing to the influences in which he moved—but yet duty compels me to say, that after returning from the battle fields around Richmond and witnessing thousands of our wounded, dying and dead countrymen the theater should have had no attractions.—It was a sad place to meet the summons of death: and I trust that henceforth that tragedy will deter the rulers of a christian people from encouraging by their presence these fountains of social corruption. Over the imperfections of so great and good a ruler I prefer to let the mantle of charity fall. I blame not so much the man as the spirit of the age, the custom of so-called

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refined society and a dumb ministry that does not warn those in power of the dangerous example of immoral and irreligious practices.

We are, moreover, called by this Providence to the exercise of humility and faith. We are naturally a proud people, who give more honor to man than to God. But our pride has been suddenly and signally rebuked by the late painful Providence. The world does not furnish an instance when such universal joy was so suddenly turned to universal sorrow. One day the nation was wild with joy because of the trumph of its arms and the near approach of peace; the next day crushed under a mountain load of sorrow. Those banners, numerous as the forest leaves waving in the evening zephyr, that gayly floated from almost every pinnacle throughout the land, suddenly dropped to half-mast craped in mourning—those bells that rang out so cheerily the triumphant notes, quickly began the slow and solemn tones that sent sadness into every heart—those little boys and girls in the street that leaped with joy as they rang the merry bells and waved their miniature flags, were in a moment hushed into a mounful silence, and with slow pace and festooned with badges of mourning passed on their way. Oh! what a change? Has any nation ever seen such a scene as this? Yet it is the Lord's doing—calling us to humility in the time of triumph and to faith in the hour of distress; faith in the Right, in Liberty, in Christianity, in God. That faith that fired the hearts of the reformers, that sustained the friends of liberty during the late fiery trial is the faith that we still need, for the future conflict—that faith in the right which stimulated the lamented President to break the fetters from the slave by which his name has become the world's monument and over whose death the poet fitly sings,

> "Thy task is done; the bond are free;
> We bear thee to an honored grave,
> Whose proudest monument shall be
> The broken fetters of the slave."

In view of this hour of our nation's trial and triumph the witnesses of Christ should be animated to more vigorous and sustained efforts for national reformation. Multitudes now listen to and sanction those Bible principles towards which they formily turned a deaf ear. Statesmen as well as christians are beginning to admit the necessity of a national recognition of God.—

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The nation by its frequent fasts—a new feature in its character since the war began—is making a confession of its sins and professing its dependence on God. Thus a new and inviting field is open for us to sow the seed of truth and to educate the nation to an open recognition of Messiah and his law in the national charter. This is now the present truth. Ministers should preach more, discuss more, and write more on this subject—should present the truth so clearly and forcibly to the heart of the nation that it dare not, in view of God and his judgments refuse to obey it, Let the nation see that it must either serve God or Baal—that it must either "Kiss the Son" or perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Let it understand that if the sin of slavery has been punished by a war of such magnitude and cruelty, how much severer will be the punishment of the sin—not against man, but against God—of rejecting the authority of "the Governor among the Nations."

To the faithful performance of their duty, the witnesses of Christ may be encouraged by the successes that will crown their efforts. They should not be daunted by apparent defeat. The stoning of Stephen did not discourage the early christians. The torturing of the Reformers did not quench the zeal of those that were spared. The death of a Lovejoy did not silence the leaders of the anti-slavery cause. The butchering and starving of our prisoners did not paralyze the heart of the nation or undo its grasp upon the rebellion. No! these deeds only served to stimulate to fresh and more determined exertions. The advocates of the right were cheered in their herculian task by the consciousness of success and the golden harvest of blessings to mankind which would certainly follow their efforts. Friends of Christ! strive to make your nation a christian nation; to make that starry flag the symbol of liberty and christianity; when the name of Christ shall be written in golden letters on every star, and his law upon every stripe. Grasp anew this standard of truth and bear it on with a holy enthusiasm until you plant it high on the dome of the nation where it shall wave untarnished by a traitor's breath and untouched by the jealous hand of a foreign foe. That day will come. This nation the last in birth of the great nations of the earth will become the first in reformation and glory. It shall be "high above all nations in praise, in name and in honor; a holy people unto the Lord God." May that day soon come, and to God be the praise, now and forever more. Amen.

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